

# The Biography of Mayor Shirley Franklin



In 2002 the people of Atlanta elected Shirley Franklin, a first time candidate for public office, to serve as the 58th Mayor of the City of Atlanta. Shirley Franklin became the first female mayor of the city and the first African American woman to serve as mayor of a major southern city.

Shirley Franklin had long been a behind-the-scenes municipal worker. She joined city government in 1978 when she was appointed Commissioner of Cultural Affairs by Mayor Maynard Jackson and later was named Chief Administrative Officer by his successor Mayor Andrew Young, becoming the first woman in the country to hold that position. When Maynard Jackson was elected to his third term, Franklin remained as Executive Officer of Operations.

She also served as senior vice president for external relations for the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games and served as CEO of Shirley Clarke Franklin & Associates, a management and consulting firm for public and community affairs. In 1998, Franklin was appointed to serve on Governor Barnes' three-person transition team and later was asked to serve on the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority.

Since her inauguration in 2002, Mayor Franklin has worked to build a "Best in Class" managed city by strengthening existing frameworks, implementing progressive changes and making the tough decisions necessary to improve Atlanta. She has returned accountability to City government and improved the quality of life for all Atlantans.

Mayor Shirley Franklin is working hard to make Atlanta a nurturing place for our children, a relaxing place for our visitors and a wonderful place for our residents to call home.

When Franklin took office, Atlanta was mired in the economic doldrums. Franklin discovered a deficit of more than \$82 million. To restore financial stability, Mayor Franklin has made tough decisions that have resulted in a balanced budget for three consecutive years and have generated a healthy reserve. The adjustments in financial accountability resulted in the city receiving the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance officers Association in 2004.

The City of Atlanta's Water/Sewer infrastructure was also in decline and the city was operating under two federal consent decrees and two state consent orders. Mayor Franklin vowed to give Atlantans the cleanest urban streams and rivers in the country and declared herself "the Sewer Mayor." Franklin persuaded Georgia Tech President Wayne Clough to chair a panel of nationwide environmental experts charged with designing the program that would become Clean Water Atlanta. The panel recommendations laid the foundation for a \$3.2 billion overhaul of the city's aging water and sewer system. In 2004, she convinced the General Assembly to allow Atlanta to place a municipal option sales tax before the voters. Atlantans overwhelmingly passed the sales tax referendum generating money for Clean Water Atlanta and reducing the water rate increase from 45 percent to 1 percent.

The aging infrastructure was the unseen crisis facing the city, homelessness was the visible one. In an effort to address the issue, she asked United Way and Horace Sibley to form a commission of city leaders to study the problem and create a "Blueprint to End Homelessness in Atlanta in 10 Years." The flagship project, the 24/7 Gateway Center, a facility designed to serve 500 people a day with sleeping and shower facilities, food service and access to drug treatment, mental health, medical services and job training opened in July 2005.

In 2005, Mayor Franklin partnered with Atlanta Public Schools (APS) to support students and their families. Mayor Franklin established "Next Step...The Atlanta Promise," a new program for every APS high school senior that is designed to engage them in planning for their future beyond high school whether it is college, the workforce, technical school or the military. Mayor Franklin met with nearly 1,400 APS seniors to discuss their plans, provided jobs and internships for 392 students in the public and private sectors, and assisted 156 students with financial aid counseling by National Student Fund. The program raised \$1.9 million including \$600,000 in kind jobs, technical training, and computers and \$1.1 in scholarships to 300 graduates.

Under Mayor Franklin's leadership and cooperation, the City of Atlanta is a Safer and Cleaner City.

Atlanta Police Department accomplishments:

- 95% of the sworn police positions have been filled
- Overall crime is down 11% in the six major crime categories: murder, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, larceny and auto theft.
- In December 2004, The Atlanta Police Department (APD) received accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. APD excelled in all 446 standards during the review process, something no other major law enforcement agency has reached before.

Atlanta Department of Public Works accomplishments:

- Completed dozens of beautiful and functional streetscape projects.
- Reduced solid waste collection delays by changing collection procedures.
- Overseeing the \$150 million Quality of Life Bond Program. This program allows the City to leverage funds to increase the City's new sidewalks, beautify major arterials, improve both pedestrian and vehicle safety through improved traffic signalization, provide for walkways, trails and park amenities, as well as reconstruct and resurface damaged streets and bridges. Nearly 1,200 projects are underway or completed.

Mayor Franklin is an experienced leader and a concerned citizen who has been committed to creating a safer, cleaner, more open and responsible city. The City of Atlanta is on the rise, full of opportunity, openness and optimism and its best days are still ahead.

Mayor Franklin's commitment to the community is exemplified by her service on over 40 boards and committees throughout her career. She currently serves as a member of the Democratic National Committee and Treasurer of the Democratic Party of Georgia. She is the Georgia Municipal Association's 2nd Vice President, Chair of the Travel and Tourism Taskforce and the Chair of the US Conference of Mayor's Women's Caucus. She is the Chair of Atlanta Development Authority, the Chair of the Brand Atlanta Campaign and a member of the National Conference of Black Mayor's Business Council. She is secretary of the Board of the Atlanta Regional Commission and serves as Chair of its Ethics Committee and Secretary of the Executive Committee.

Mayor Shirley Franklin has been featured in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Fortune magazine, Ebony magazine, Black Enterprise and many other national and local publications. Governing magazine named her 2004 Public Official of the Year. In 2005, Time Magazine named her one of the top five mayors in the country; she is one of 65 finalists for World Mayor 2005 and has been named one of "America's Best Leaders" by U.S. News and World Report and the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Esquire Magazine has named her one of the best and brightest in 2005. Mayor Franklin is also a recipient of the 2005 John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award.

Franklin earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Howard University and was awarded her Masters of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. Mayor Franklin was awarded an honorary degree from Howard University and an honorary degree from the Atlanta College of Art.

Mayor Franklin has been a resident of southwest Atlanta for almost 35 years and is a proud parent of three adult children.